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FROM THE **DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

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Secretary Issues Guidelines for
Developing a New Research and
Development Policy

While Secretary Block has placed high priority on agricultural research, he has emphasized that the Department's programs must be limited to areas that are clearly Federal responsibilities. These objectives have important implications for USDA's science and education agencies. To help meet them, the Secretary has developed guidelines on the appropriate role and responsibilities of food, forestry, and agricultural research conducted or sponsored by the Department.

These guidelines state that it is USDA policy to sponsor or conduct research and development which contribute to--

- * Departmental action and regulatory missions and goals, the policies and objectives of the Secretary, and statutory mandates.

- * Achievement of policies, programs, and initiatives of other Federal agencies which pertain to food, forestry, and agriculture.

- * Fundamental scientific knowledge related to the biological and physical properties and processes underlying the development, production, and use of natural and man-made resources for food, fiber, and forest products.

- * Effective and efficient management and conservation of resources owned by or entrusted to USDA.

- * National defense needs articulated by the Department of Defense, national security agencies, or congressional or Executive Branch mandates.

- * Broad societal benefits or significant economic gains to the Nation, derived from food, forestry, and agriculture, where the private sector is deemed by the Secretary to be unlikely to invest adequately.

The guidelines stress that the Department is not to conduct or sponsor research which can reasonably be expected to be financed by private businesses. Any ongoing research conducted or sponsored by USDA which is commercial in nature will be terminated in a timely manner, and the resources dedicated to such research will be redirected to other areas.

The Secretary has asked me to have the Research and Education Committee review these guidelines from a Department-wide perspective and to prepare a Secretary's Memorandum on USDA R&D policy. We are now at work on this task, and we will share the results when it is completed.

Joint Council Evaluates Programs and Policies

The Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences met in April to prepare their annual report to the Secretary on priority programs and policies. Secretary Block met with the council and told the members he would be relying on their recommendations to

help him shape USDA's programs and policies in the most effective, cost-efficient manner.

The council assessed regional needs and then developed a consensus on national priorities for agricultural research, extension, and teaching that focus on maintaining and improving the capacity of the agricultural system to meet the needs of the users. The top priorities identified included--

- * A better understanding of factors affecting foreign trade.
- * Conservation and management of soil, forest, and water resources.
- * Fundamental mission-oriented research.
 - * Plant and animal efficiency.
 - * Rapid information delivery systems for decisionmaking.
 - * The farm income situation.
 - * Expertise development in the food and agricultural sciences.

In conjunction with priority setting, the council will also include in their June report discussions of--

- * Implications of the Agricultural Research Service shift toward basic research.
- * Responsibilities of the Federal partner in extension work and in formula-based agricultural research in the States.
- * The role of the USDA Assistant Secretary for Science and Education in coordinating research and education.
- * The USDA role in human expertise development.
- * The role of the food and agricultural science and education system in international science and technology.

- * Strategic planning in a pluralistic, decentralized system.

The council also made preliminary plans for conducting a long-range needs assessment. This will be a base for a 5-year plan the council is preparing for research, extension, and teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences. The 5-year plan will be updated every 2 years.

Agencies Prepare for Restructured Organizations

We've been calling on our cooperators to help us as we prepare to make some difficult decisions on how to restructure the Cooperative State Research Service and Extension Service. Both agencies must reduce their staffs to adjust to new personnel ceilings set by the Office of Management and Budget.

To assure that the most important work continues, we have asked State cooperators and advisory groups for recommendations. The Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy will be working with CSRS Administrator Walter Thomas. The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy and a task force on Extension in the 80's are conducting a review for ES Administrator Mary Nell Greenwood. In addition, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges will convene a special committee to review the proposals. By mid-May, the agency administrators and I will submit recommendations to Secretary Block for approval.

BARD to Award More Than \$5 Million in Grants

In June, the Board of Directors of the Binational Agricultural Research and Development Fund (BARD) will meet at Las Cruces, N. Mex., to award grants to researchers in Israel and the United States. This grant money comes from interest on the \$80 million endowment established by both countries in November 1978--a unique cooperative endeavor. BARD currently supports research in soil and water conservation, management, and utilization; crop and plant improvement; crop protection; improvement of animal production technology, including aquaculture and veterinary medicine; recycling of wastes

to support agricultural production; agricultural engineering; postharvest sciences; and agricultural economics.

Criteria for Publishing Technical Information Endorsed

The Secretary's Policy and Coordination Council has approved a paper prepared by the USDA Research and Education Committee's Work Group for Scientific and Technical Publications that is entitled "USDA's Role in Publishing Scientific and Technical Information." The agency heads have been asked to distribute copies of this paper, which sets forth criteria to be used by scientists, authors, and others in determining information that should be published by USDA.

New Publication Management System Announced

Secretary Block recently ordered a new publication management system within USDA. The Secretary expects increased efforts to reduce publications and publication costs at the agency level and requires approval of all new publications and reprints of existing publications at the under or assistant secretary level.

User Fees to be Charged for USDA Publications

At the same time he announced the new publications management system, Secretary Block said the Department will save over \$6 million in fiscal year 1983 by adopting the recommendations of the Department's Periodical and Pamphlet Elimination Review (PAPER) Task Force. More than 500 publications have been eliminated from the Department's inventory as a result of the work of the PAPER Task Force, which has been renamed the Secretary's Review Board. (The task force was described in my previous letters 22 and 24.) The Secretary also said, "I

expect additional savings in the future as the Department moves to a user fee program for all publications beginning this October."

The Economic Research Service and Statistical Reporting Service are leading this effort by beginning May 1 to offer their publications and periodicals on a subscription basis or for sale through the U.S. Government Printing Office or the National Technical Information Service. Cooperators will still be invited to "ride" printing orders, that is, to purchase at cost the publications they want at the time of printing.

Guayule Is Topic of U.S. Mission to Australia

U.S. scientists recently returned from Australia where they exchanged scientific and technical information on guayule research and commercial applications. The trip was sponsored by USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development, which was responsible for developing a memorandum of agreement between the U.S. Joint Commission on Guayule Research and Commercialization, which I chair, and the State of New South Wales, Australia. The visit was the first event to take place under the agreement the two parties signed in January.

Richard Wheaton, program manager of USDA's domestic rubber program, headed the delegation and serves as executive secretary of the Joint Commission. Other members of the team were Stanley Alcorn and Del Fangmeier of the University of Arizona, Wayne Whitworth of New Mexico State University, Dale Bucks of the USDA Water Conservation Laboratory, and Clarence Grogan of the Cooperative State Research Service.

Joint programs in plant breeding and physiology will be developed during the next 6 to 10 months. The cooperative effort with New South Wales holds special potential as a source of information on dryland guayule cultivation.

Canada/United States Meet on Acid Precipitation

Leaders of the U.S. Interagency Task Force on Acid Precipitation met at the Canadian Embassy in April with representatives from Canada's Federal and Province governments to develop a protocol for exchanging scientific data. Serving with me as cochairs on this task force are James L. Regens of the Environmental Protection Agency and Lester Machta of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

We reviewed existing cooperative arrangements at the April meeting and set the stage for further cooperation at the Federal levels, as well as with States and Provinces. All meeting participants expressed a desire for open communications between scientists of Canada and the United States, with the interagency task force functioning as a clearinghouse for this information exchange--a sort of switchboard to put one scientist in touch with another scientist.

ARS Selects Research Associate Proposals

The Agricultural Research Service has selected 12 new research associate proposals from those submitted by many of the agency's 147 research locations. ARS will provide \$420,000 to fund the work of 12 recently graduated scientists of exceptional ability. Each scientist will work on basic research projects in the animal and plant sciences for 1 year. The projects include--

- * Genetic engineering techniques to produce wheat and rice plants from cells instead of seeds.

- * Combined biological and chemical methods to control cotton seedling diseases.

- * Genetic manipulation of chicken genes for resistance to a virus-causing disease.

- * Assessing herbicides' ability to kill weeds but not crops.

- * Eradicating pseudorabies in swine by virus "fingerprinting."

Inventory Completed

The Science and Education Policy Analysis and Coordination Staff has just completed an inventory of USDA's research, extension, and higher education activities. The inventory will provide a basis for better cooperation and coordination among the various agencies. It is a follow-up to the "Inventory of Research, Extension, and Higher Education Related to Food and Agriculture Conducted by Federal Agencies Other Than USDA" that I mentioned in the last letter.

Findings from the inventory show that nine agencies within USDA, excluding our science and education agencies, provided \$235 million for research and extension in fiscal year 1981. Of these funds, 72 percent was allocated for research; 27 percent for extension; and 1 percent for higher education. These agencies have primary responsibilities for action programs, and their research and education programs clearly support their missions. About 49 percent of the work was conducted through contracts and grants with universities and other institutions.

Science and education agencies, which have programs that support activities in all USDA agencies, spent \$932.2 million for research and extension in fiscal year 1981, with \$627.8 million going for research and \$292.3 million for extension. Higher education was supported with \$12.1 million; this was provided by science and education agencies (\$11.5 million) and by USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service (\$0.6 million).

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